

1891

# The Voice of the Phi Sigma -- 1891 -- Vol. 13, No. 04

Phi Sigma

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.colum.edu/phisigma\\_voice](http://digitalcommons.colum.edu/phisigma_voice)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Geography Commons](#), [Poetry Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Phi Sigma, "The Voice of the Phi Sigma -- 1891 -- Vol. 13, No. 04" (1891). *The Voice of the Phi Sigma*. 70.  
[http://digitalcommons.colum.edu/phisigma\\_voice/70](http://digitalcommons.colum.edu/phisigma_voice/70)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Phi Sigma Collection at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Voice of the Phi Sigma by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago.



# The Voice of $\Phi \Sigma$ . 1891

Vol. XIII.

No. 4.





## Index.

1. A Daisy in September,  
by John Eliot Bowen.
2. The Armenian Monastery in Venice,  
by Amelia M. Fisk.
3. Armenian Proverbs for Phi Sigma  
Fishermen.
4. Woman's Influence,  
by Mrs. Alfred Fitch.
5. A Week in Styria,  
by Dr. Ethan A. Gray.
6. Spenser's Argument for Suicide,  
by Amelia M. Fisk.
7. The Model Wellesley Girl, 1880,  
by Katharine Lee Bates.



A Daisy in September.

John Eliot Bowen.

(died 1890)

I slept in a field of golden-rod  
That softly swayed in the breeze;  
And I dreamed I had beheld God  
And crossed the golden seas.

I breathed the balm of perfumed air  
Weighted with songs to God,  
Whose glory was gilded everywhere  
The feet of angels trod.

Oh, the glitter of gold was grand to see!  
But dazzling to mortal sight  
Was the glory of God; it blinded me;  
A million suns were less bright.

And I looked away, and I saw a face  
So serene, so calm, so white,  
It seemed to say, "I'll give thee grace  
To behold the heavenly light."

And I waked, and by my side there grew,  
Low under the golden-rod,  
A daisy of palest and purest hue,  
And meek, like a child of God.



It had lived from June its life for me,  
Where never a footstep trod,  
And since that day I've loved to see  
A daisy 'mong golden-rod.

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1884.



1.

The Armenian Monastery,  
in Venice.

"He is so handsome that the walls reflect his beauty"; thus runs an Armenian proverb. Let me change it to "She is so handsome that the water reflects her beauty," and I will apply it to the picturesque old city of Venice, floating amid the ever-shifting waters of the Adriatic Sea. The city is defended from the full force of the tides by a natural sea-wall, the long low-lying Island of the Lido. Against this the breakers roar, and on its fine beach all Venice resorts to bathe in warm weather. Within this natural breakwater is a large lagoon, where lie the clustered islands of Venice.

One Friday afternoon, in this same lovely month of October, a year ago, our little party of three took a gondola near the Ducal palace, and were soon out in the midst of the Grand Canal. One cannot imagine a more dreamy, I might almost say lazy, mode of locomotion than a gondola-ride. The gondolier is behind you, and skillfully propels the little boat, while you lean back and listlessly give yourself up to the full enjoyment of the perfect rest and quiet, - no jarring, no noise, perfect repose.



Looking backward, we saw the five domes of St. Mark's grand cathedral and its massive bell-tower, the Ducal Palace, and the great paved square with its two fine columns. These give character and fame to the whole city, and form the centre of its life and history.

As we gradually receded from this beautiful group of buildings, they seemed to slowly sink until they just floated on the water, fairy-like, as a mass of pretty flowers might do. An artist's eye could not but be charmed with the grouping of such delicate colors, under a bright blue sky just softened a bit with October's haze.

All about us were great stretches of almost smooth water, with here and there a lovely island, which seemed to have wandered away from the parent city, and to have set up housekeeping for itself; and far beyond lay the Lido.

On we went for half an hour, till, having nearly reached the Lido, we came to a little island, surrounded with gray walls. A fringe of green grass grew at the water's edge, and above were red roofs and the green tops of trees, peering over from out an inner garden. This was the Island of San Lazzaro, the home of the Armenian Monastery.

A long, long time ago, a hospital for lepers had stood there. Later, nothing



but ruins remained. In 1717, it was sold to Mekhitar of Sebaste, an Armenian priest, whose aim it was to found an institution for the propagation of learning among the Armenians. With this purpose in view, he gathered scholars, whom he educated and sent back to Armenia as teachers. He set up a printing-office and printed books, translated by his pupils from the best works in other languages. The Armenians in the East felt the civilizing effect of all this mental culture, and many helped him in his work. The good old man has long since passed away, but the Institution still flourishes in its one hundred and seventy-fifth year. A more quaint old place, one can rarely find.

Alighting from our gondola and passing through a doorway, we entered an open corridor with a range of pillars just beyond, through which the gay green of trees and the bright colors of flowers charmed our view. Taking a few steps we were in the court-garden. In the center grew four tall cypress trees, which were presented to the Monks in 1816 by Byron, when he made his memorable stay in Venice and studied in this monastery. Roses, magnolia, oleander, and honeysuckle were blossoming near. An old monk, whose face showed peace and contentment, offered to be our guide.



4.

Ascending a staircase on our right, we entered the library. It consists of one large hall, built by the founder, Mekhitar, one hundred and sixty years ago, and two smaller rooms, one of which is finely decorated and is devoted to the collection of Armenian manuscripts, one of the riches of the Institution. Some of these manuscripts are translations from Greek originals, long since lost, and are of inestimable value. The most ancient manuscript of this collection is a beautiful copy of the Armenian Ritual, dating from the eighth century. Perhaps the most celebrated, is the Bible of the Armenian Queen Melke', dating from the year 902, in which we can see the handwriting of the queen.

The main hall of the Library has been enriched by gifts from many celebrated people, - popes, kings, artists, scholars, and soldiers, have remembered this quaint old brotherhood of monks, - Alexander II of Russia, Napoleon III., Dom Pedro of Brazil, Pope Gregory XVI., Clement XIII., Canova, Byron, Bryant, Longfellow, and many others. The place of state is occupied by a very fine Egyptian mummy, lying in a glass case.

Next to the library is the very room used by Lord Byron during his studies at the monastery. There you may



5.  
see his autograph both in English and Armenian; likewise the autographs of the distinguished personages who have visited this place, - the Emperors of Austria and of Brazil, Napoleon III, Maximilian, Carlotta, the Prince of Wales, Princess Louise, Queen Margherita of Italy, Queen Mathilde of Holland, and many others. There are separate books for royalty and for the common people, and the placid old monk who conducted us was very careful that we should not make the mistake of inscribing our names in the Royal Visitor's Book.

Leaving the library, we went down stairs again, for ladies cannot visit the monks' private rooms, and were shown into the Refectory. It is a large wainscoted hall, with tables ranged along the sides, and one at the upper end for the Archbishop. Here, seated in due order, the inmates of this simple home dine in silence, after an opening prayer and psalm, while one of the novices reads, first a lesson from the Bible, and then another lesson from some other book. When the meal is ended, the Archbishop rings a bell, the reader retires to dine, the twenty monks and thirty scholars rise, give thanks, and retire to the garden or their studies. The whole household numbers about eighty.



From the Refectory, most people like to have a glimpse of the very neat kitchen, and the family cat, Old Titon, a splendid fellow weighing about twenty English pounds.

We were conducted across the courtyard to the neatest and daintiest of little churches, containing five altars, constructed of different kinds of marble. On the principal altar stands a beautiful marble tabernacle, and on the walls are religious paintings.

Returning from the church, we cross the court-garden and enter the printing-office on the left of the entrance hall. The roof of this room is supported by four marble columns, and is filled with printing-presses and tables covered with books. The inmates of the monastery are continually translating the best works of Europe into the Armenian language. About fifteen compositors, printers, and book-binders are daily kept busy. In a small room adjoining, books are kept for inspection or sale. Having bought a little pamphlet containing Armenian proverbs translated into English, we said good-by to our guide, stepped aboard our gondola, and were soon landed at the Lido, where we strolled along the outer beach and watched the waves come rolling in. As we passed the Island of San Lazzaro on our return to Venice, the sweet tone of the monastery bell in the slender bell-tower, was calling the monks to vespers. I could imagine them



7.  
worshiping in their little chapel, and  
that is the picture I will leave in your  
minds, of the monks of San Lazzaro.

Oct. 20, 1891.

Amelia M. Fisk.



Armenian Proverbs  
for Phi Sigma Fishermen.

If you are afraid to wet your feet, you  
will never catch fish.

He that falls into the water, is not afraid  
of the rain.

Whilst the fish is in the water, do not  
put the gridiron on the fire.

A fish appears larger in the water than  
it is.

The fish was asked: Have you news  
from the sea? He answered: Very much,  
but my mouth is full of water.



## Woman's Influence.

Under the above subject the writer has taken some facts from writings about, "Famous Women of the Century", "Eminent Women of the Age", and other extracts that have come under her eye; in many cases using the authors own words.

Woman having been created in the divine image, as well as man, though her work may be varied, we believe, do we not, that women have the same capacities for intellectual, social, and moral advancement, <sup>as men</sup> and are therefore individually responsible for the development of each faculty.

"Neither men's rights, nor women's rights, should be considered, but human rights, the right of each and all."

Every civilized nation owes much to its women, and history clearly shows that the advancement of any nation is marked by the progress of its women.



Therefore the life and success of American women, may be strongly felt, in the social, literary and professional advancement that has marked the history of <sup>the</sup> United States in the last century.

And the present time gives most brilliant prospects for the future, in the noble army of women ever active in good works and great reforms, when even greater benefits will result in the advance women and the nation will have made toward high moral, intellectual, and physical development.

An interesting item on physical culture for women, was given last week at "Y. W. C. A. Convention held in Chicago," by Miss Hinkwater Supt. of "Y. W. C. A." of Boston.

In her talk on gymnasium work, she said that eight hundred young women are now receiving benefit from that department of their work, conducted under the most approved methods, and on strictly scientific principals. They employ a salaried physician at \$1000. a



year, who sees that each particular case is properly developed; they also have a regular instructor at \$1000. a year.

To bring before your mind, I will relate a few facts in history that show the progress women have already made since the early ages, when woman's influence was felt, even then.

"Women for ages have had to advance with men, and struggle up with them, along the path of savagery, through the ages of mythology, and Judaism, on to the present era of Christianity."

Women in heathen times and countries were considered as no benefit, except for some sacrifice, and the girl-infant was scarcely permitted to live, often being thrown by the mother to the crocodiles of the Nile. And every where history records that the Pagan woman was abused and degraded, at least among the savage tribes.

The progress of the race has resulted in the mental and



moral culture of its people, and has been exhibited in Europe and America, by the advance women have made, more than in other countries.

That women are more faithful than men, and more quickly aroused to sympathy, is conceded, which fact has won them fame in responding to duties calls.

But men may be as faithful, and many have been, as is shown in the lives of so many great and noble soldiers of humanity.

"But man betrayed our Master, condemned him to death, and man deserted him in the hour of trial." "Woman alone, pressed her way through the crowd, to the foot of the cross. Woman embalmed his body; Woman first greeted him when he had burst the bonds of death, and triumphed over the grave. And women today stand first and foremost in the Master's work."

"Leo Miller states in his 'Women and the Divine Republic,' that



moral elements controlling society are needed, and that women good and true, are to supply those elements, and that women emancipated, enlightened and enfranchised, will be equal to the demand. "

And it is towards that end we are all working, some perhaps with stronger convictions, and greater insight, than others.

"Mrs Sara J. Hale says, "Woman is God's appointed agent of morality, the teacher and inspirer of the virtues of humanity;" and the permanent improvement of our race depends on the manner in which her mission is treated by man, "

How grand it is to live in a country of which one says, "It is reserved for America to show to the world the rarest excellence of <sup>women</sup>, in the exercise of the largest and truest liberty the world has ever known."

The women whose lives certainly must have been an influence, in the age in which they lived, date back to the time of Deborah, the



prophetess, called the "mother of Israel," beautiful in character, noble in life.  
Queen Esther, Miriam the prophetess, Ruth and Naomi, Rebekah, Rachel, and others of the "Women of Israel" whose deeds have given them prominence.

Greece and Rome also had their women who are still known for their graces and virtues.

"The wifely virtues of Lucretia, and the motherly excellence of Cornelia" are commended by all.

The Spartan women are noted for their bravery, the greatest virtue they cultivated being patriotism.

And the women of our land have shown a Spartan heroism, both during the Revolution, and the Civil War.

Without doubt there were many noble women before the spread of Christianity, but as one says, "there was no Boas."

Pocahontas, the daughter of Powhatan, whose daring deed we can all relate, ~~was~~ <sup>being</sup> the first native to be converted to Christianity, was



perhaps the first woman in the line of those who have especially influenced the affairs and progress of our country.

And other names might be spoken as being especially rare, in those wild days, but space forbids.

Mary, the mother of Washington beautiful in simplicity, certainly was of strong and noble purpose. To raise such a son, as the "Father of our Country".

And many other women of the Revolution were brave and daring and made many sacrifices to rid themselves and their country from the foreign yoke of oppression. "Taxation without representation" then as now, was regarded as unjust.

In the first half of this century the name of Lucretia Mott came into prominence. She, a Quaker preacher & most philanthropic woman, was engaged in the temperance movement, and especially strong in the anti-slavery effort, favoring universal suffrage. It has



been said, "she was the greatest woman ever produced in this country."

Dorothea L. Dix, the founder of so many of the State Hospitals, was a great power in her faithful work with the insane. She is called the American Mrs Frye.

Clara Barton, the prime mover in the Society of the Red Cross, deserves to be mentioned for her many labors in war times.

The events of the Civil War, record a long list of heroic and efficient women nurses, and many more as brave who did their part at home.

Many of England's famous women could be mentioned with great praise, but the list is already too long, ~~so we will give but a few more of our own countries.~~

The lives of such women as Mary A. Livermore, Francis E. Willard, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone (Blackwell), Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Ward Howe, Louisa M. Alcott, Maria Mitchell, and Elizabeth C. Agassiz, all show



that in their several pursuits they  
excelled and even perfected their  
aims.

And these are but a few of the  
brightest stars in the galaxy of  
women of our times.

As to the influence that will  
be given to women to exert in  
the vital affairs of our <sup>state</sup> country,  
time and 'progression' will only  
reveal.

Mrs. Alfred Fitch.



## A Week in Styria

It was as pleasant as a chat with a long absent friend to turn the leaves of my diary written a few years ago. I was in doubt as to what should be my subject in this issue of the "Voice" and turned to the old journal in search of an idea. Finally I found a page dated "Oppowitz, Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1888," and in a moment my mental camera began to turn out reprints of the scenes of a happy week among the Styrian Alps in Upper Austria.

It was at 3 o'clock in the morning when I and a companion, a comrade from the Vienna University, stepped out upon the dark platform ofraidhofens station. The night was dark, and drizzly, the fog rolled up in banks against the station house, enveloping everybody in a damp smelling indistinctness. Owing to recent heavy rains there had been delays on the railway, and, while we waited, shivering, for the departure of the post wagon for the village, the train waited also. We had the rare pleasure of seeing the gold braided gentleman in charge of the train begin to fume and fuss and fret. He was scolding about the villainous "dog weather" which made delay necessary, then grumbled picturesque German profanity about everything in general. Finally at the end of a quarter of an hour he received orders to move with caution. Then he blew his whistle, then the engineer tooted a spluttering wheeze on the engine whistle, the station master pounded the gong and we were alone.



We discovered that the village proper was half a mile away down the dark muddy road. The driver of the post wagon offered - for a small consideration - his seat on top of the mail sacks; we accepted and soon clattered into the courtyard of the "Green Lamb" Tavern where the landlord - in his capacity as postmaster - receipted for the mail and told us ~~that~~ that we could have blankets on the hall floor - We declined with thanks and betook ourselves to the cobbly street en route for our destination, Opponty, twelve miles away. We strode up the crooked village street, turning corners, passing under arches, through 'court yards, uphill and down, until we found ourselves on the open highroad.

As it became light I expected to see a beautiful sunrise, the sky having cleared off, but, as time passed and it became light we found that the valley was so narrow and the mountains so high that at best the sun would only penetrate the depths of the valley for a couple of hours at noon.

Our road lay along the left bank of the crystal <sup>spring</sup> Gbbs, a small mountain stream emptying into the Danube near Lutz. The fall was great, rapids were frequent and the water boiled and foamed the greater part of the time. Occasionally a fish would spring from out the spray, its white belly glistening a moment - and then dive again into the waves. Once a fox trotted across our path trailing his magnificent bush behind him. As soon as he saw us however, his flight resembled a long brown streak as he scurried away amongst the copse near by.

Suddenly, as we rounded a sharp turn in the road, a Gamsbuck stepped out daintily upon a ledge of rock on the other side



of the ravine. We halted and for a moment all were still. Then, as if doubting our intentions, which were peaceful, the graceful animal whirled around, and I had seen my first wild gemsbok. It had now become quite light and we began to meet the peasants on their way to work. Some passed us with a friendly smile and a cordial "God's Greeting" while others looked at us suspiciously and received our greeting silently. Then we would meet a group of girls carrying sickle and rake. They always looked aside as they passed and then invariably looked back at us. I saw them do it. Feeling uncertain of our way we accosted one of these maidens, a regular Mand Muller; she spoke bad German, poor girl, for we could not understand her and we were reduced to making diagrams in the dust. Then she comprehended.

Within a mile of our destination we passed a neat little house apparently belonging to a well to do peasant. Two little flaxen haired ladies were perched on a fence post both gazing down the road as if expecting someone. As we approached they shouted "there he comes!" and in a second were racing down the road toward an approaching Gen<sup>d</sup>arme who was still a quarter of a mile away. As they met the rider, who had been out on a night ride this the mountain<sup>he</sup> lifted both youngsters to the horse's neck and the trio rode past us laughing and talking. In her efforts to keep her eyes on us and her father at the same time the smaller child nearly lost her hold and would have fallen had she not clutched the



horse's name.

We now crossed ~~the~~ bridge and passed into a broad shallow side valley into the town of Oppony. The street followed the aimless wandering of a small creek which furnishes power for sickle factories whose trip hammers are heard day and night, weeks at a time. Entering the village we came upon a small wagon train leaving the village square. The drivers were in most every instance of the sturdy peasants whose pride is to know no lord but the Emperor. Their land is free and so are they, as every action <sup>shows</sup>. Their costume was picturesque, consisting of broad felt hats, low in the crown, short jackets bearing two rows of shining brass buttons <sup>each</sup> the size of a quarter, embroidered shirts, knickerbockers and low shoes. The stockings came to a point just below the knee. The women, of whom there were quite a number wore fancy kerchiefs and bright red or blue woollen dresses whose skirts reached to the ankle. All wore the pretty ribbon bedecked aprons of the Austrian peasant women of the better class. The best thing about their picturesqueness is their ignorance of the fact, tourists not having as yet not infested these valleys to any great extent. While the wagons were creaking over the bridge the sun succeeded in shooting a few rays through the banks of mist and cloud which hovered so low as to conceal the upper part of the mountains from the eye. Have you ever noticed how rapidly snow melts when a warm draught from your open window



strikes the flakes upon the ledge? Then you can in some degree, conceive of the rapidity with which the vapors of the valley vanished when the Sun decided to show us the beautiful green slopes of the "Bauern-Boden". We met our friends at the breakfast table in the shaded garden, a few minutes later, and enjoyed a hearty (for Germany) breakfast. Then the healthy weariness born of vigorous exertion asserted itself and before long the only hotel in the ~~city~~ place held two very drowsy guests. Before "turning in" let me give my inventory of the quaint bedroom and its contents. In one corner, a high porcelain stove, in another an antique bookcase filled with old papers and seed corn. The decorations comprised a chromo of Franz Joseph, alongside the Virgin Mary, done in red blue and black, a plaster figure of the crucifixion and some dried Alpen roses; two single beds laden with enormous feather covers and several heavy oaken chairs and a mahogany table made up the furniture. The windows were small square things with sashes swinging inward. They opened upon a green mountain side so steep that, in order to see the blue sky it was necessary to crane one's neck far out of the window. Down stairs a broad hall ran the length of the house. Its floor was of stone flags and it served as dining hall for the laborers employed on the farm. As I came down at noon the table was spread for dinner. i.e. the oil cloth had been removed, a prodigious tureen of soup or



stew had been placed on the table and all present stood around, heads bowed and hands clasped while a little fellow of eight said grace. Then, that preliminary having been accomplished each individual dipped into the bowl with his long spoon and - it was somewhat too communistic for me.

I adjourned to the summer house where I found a rustic, <sup>looking</sup> young man drumming out a few bars of a Schubert something or other on a twangy old piano. The young man was very deferential, which I did not understand until I discovered that he was my landlord. He was about thirty years of age, fairly well educated, a musical enthusiast, and the most bashful man I ever saw. He was elected captain of the local fire department during my sojourn in Opponty, and the assembled firemen waited four long hours before the new chief could be induced to come before them to assume command.

He was something of a Pook Bah, being manager of the only Royal & Imperial tobacco store in the place, also organist of the little church and, not the least important, he was the village butcher, "all rolled up into one". In spite of these honors he was not one bit proud ("for he lived in the country.")

\* \* \* \* \*

It is the ambition of every traveler to climb a mountain. We proved to be no exceptions and therefore it was that one fine morning found us equipped and in



marching order. Our way lay up the old Bauern-  
boden, a mountain owned directly by a corporation  
of peasants who have successfully resisted the  
efforts of Nobles to gain possession. At first  
the way lay through thickets shady and damp.  
along the way we picked many small deliciously  
sweet strawberries. Altho "many a mickle makes  
a mickle", it takes many such strawberries  
to make a mouthful. We soon left the berries  
behind and tramped steadily upwards for an  
hour. then we stopped at a little forest inn  
to ask for something cold. No, they had no sweet  
milk nor buttermilk, but they had sour curds  
and fresh beer. How fresh? well only a week old.  
But it was good then! We drank water.

After resting a half hour we started on again,  
having informed ourselves of the way meanwhile.

Some time later, just when is not certain in my  
mind we missed our way and now we found ourselves  
stopped by a frowning cliff some hundreds of feet high.  
To our right one of our number descried a path and  
we slowly made our way upwards. A comparatively  
easy climb of ten minutes brought us to an abrupt  
halt; the path ended in a little hollow on the verge  
of a precipice. Evidently a gnomish had made his couch  
here and the path we had followed was what the natives  
call a "mild path". The only thing to do was to climb upwards,  
for a retreat was decidedly dangerous when compared



with an advance. The latter was considered safe, inas-  
much as the face of the rock above was pink with Alpenrose  
and where Alpenrose flourish there is always foothold  
for a man. At last thoroughly tired out and after a  
couple of hairbreadth escapes from a quick descent  
down the mountain side we reached the summit and  
ensconced ourselves full length on a table rock on  
the sunny side of the peak.

Somewhat rested we then dined on black bread  
radishes, cheese and a bottle of mountain beer, leaving  
as a sauce three full grown appetites. As dessert  
we sang student songs and awoke the echoes. Then  
we sang the dear old songs of "Kameradschaft" where  
~~every~~ <sup>all</sup> men join "Du and Du". How we enjoyed the  
fresh blood vitalizing air! So clear was it that we  
could see the snow peaks of the Tyrol, miles to the  
south, while in between, the bald rocky peaks rose one  
beyond the other like a herd of enormous elephants.

Far down the Gletsch valley we could see the white spire of  
the Hardhofen church. Little Oppenitz was hidden by the  
mountain. When we had rested and, at the same time  
shouted ourselves out, we began the down trip. Almost  
down the mountain path we met a forester in his  
green suit of Melton cloth; four hounds followed at his  
heels, now and then stopping to sniff at a rabbit burrow  
or to bark at us until reproved by their master. We then  
supped at the forester's hut in the woods having bowls of  
cream and "house bread" as home made is called, for supper.



Sitting on the bench in front of the hub we could hear the  
vesper bells of Opposite church, sounding mellow in the  
distance the sweet sounds mingled with the distant  
lowing of cattle and the halloos of some lusty young farmer  
lad. Near by a brook tumbled over the boulders and  
a few rods away turned a primitive water wheel with  
splash and plash: then as if this sound picture were  
not enough Arcadian, came the full moon peeping thro'  
the fir trees, and <sup>filling</sup> ~~filling~~ the quiet little valley with  
its soft silvery light. Truly it was a perfect night  
and a fitting close to a perfect day -

Dr. Ethan A. Gray,  
Oct, 1891.



1.  
Spencer's Argument for Suicide.

There are many, out-of-the-way corners of literature into which few readers have penetrated. One of the most unique of these may be found in that beautiful allegorical poem, *The Faery Queen*, by Edmund Spenser. It seems strange that, amid the stateliness and imaginative beauty of the *Faery Queen*, one should find an elaborate argument for suicide! Look in the ninth Canto of the first Book, beginning at the twenty-first stanza, and there you will find it.

This is the substance thereof.  
The lovely Una and the Redcrosse Knight  
are travelling together. One meets them  
as on the wings of the wind. They see—  
"An armed knight towards them gallops fast,  
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,  
Or other griesly thing, that him aghast.  
Still as he fled his eye was backward cast,  
As if his fear still followed him behind."  
"Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his head  
To be unarmed, and curled uncombed heares  
Upstarting stiffe, dismayed with uncouth dread;  
Nor drop of blood in all his face appears,  
Nor life in him: and to increase his feares,  
In fowle reproch of knighthoods faire degree,  
About his neck an hempen rope he weares,  
That with his glistening armes does ill agree;



But he of rope or armes has now no memoree." The Redcrosse Knight stops him and makes him declare the cause of his appearance and flight, assuring him of present safety. He tremblingly relates how he had lately chanced to keep company with another knight, Sir Terwin, who was "not so happy as might happy be", on account of unrequited love; how they had been inveigled by a dismal fiend, Despaire, into his doleful cave; how this fiend had tried to persuade them to commit suicide; how his companion did the deed; and how he, seeing it, had changed his mind and fled from that awful presence. May God never let you hear his charmed speeches, he concludes. The Redcrosse Knight exclaims, "How may a man (said he) with idle speech Be wonne to spoyle the castle of his health?"

The fearful knight tells him, beware. The Redcrosse Knight asks, What is your name, and will you guide me to this dreadful place? He replies that his name is Sir Trevisan, and, against his own wishes, he will guide The Redcrosse Knight to the cave of Despaire.

Soon they come to a craggy cliff, at whose foot is a cave, -

"Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,"  
 "On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owle,



Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave  
Far from that haunt all other chearefull fowle;  
And all about it wandering ghostes did waile and howle".

Dead trees stand all around, on whose  
branches many had hanged themselves.  
Their carcasses lie strewn around.

"That darkesome cave they enter, where they find  
That cursed man low sitting on the ground,  
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind:  
His grisly lockes, long grown and unbound,  
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,  
And hid his face; through which his hollow <sup>eyne</sup>  
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as a stound;  
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and pine  
Were shronk into his jawes, as he did never dine."  
Rags, "find and patched with thorns" were  
his only garments, and beside him lay the  
corse of Sir Trevisan's friend all wet with  
blood.

When the Redcrosse Knight thus saw  
Sir Trevisan's tale proven true, he burned  
with fiery zeal to avenge such villainy.  
He cries out: -

"What justice can but judge against thee right,  
With thine own blood to price his blood, here shed in sight!"

Foolish man, says Despaire, "is rash a  
doom to give"? Does not justice always teach  
that "he should die, who merites not to live?"  
Now follows Despaire's plea for suicide,  
divided into eight arguments. In the  
poetry, these divisions are not at all clearly



defined, but, by study and condensation into prose, they may be made distinct.

1. He who does not deserve to live, ought to die. It was the guilty conscience of this knight, which drove him to suicide.
2. He that batheth life, let him die. (If he cannot appreciate what he has, or if he hate it, why then should he have <sup>it</sup>?)
3. He that lives a troubled, uneasy life, let him betake himself to easy, restful death. If a traveler, homeward bound, meets a flood in his weary course, is it not a favor to help him over the waters? Is it kind to hinder him who yearns for death? Would you be a "dog in the manger"; - neither gain the pleasure yourself, nor let anyone else gain it?
4. The necessitarian argument. The fact that fate rules over our destinies, and that if one is to kill one's self, it must be.

"Who then can strive with strong necessity,"

"Or shun the death ordained by destiny?"

5. The longer one's life is, the greater the sin; the greater the sin, the greater the punishment. Have you not enough sins laid up against you already to answer for at the day of judgment, that you should desire to commit any more?
6. All sinners are on the wrong road, - which leads them further from the right way, the longer they pursue it. Then stop now, and you will be nearest heaven.



7. Why do you still cling to life?

"For what hath life, that may it loved make,  
And gives not rather cause it to forsake?  
Fears, sicknesses, age, losses, labours, sorrow, strife,  
Paine, hunger, cold, that makes the heart to quake."  
You have had many troubles; death would  
forestall many more.

9. "Why then dost thou, O man of sin, desire  
To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?  
Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire  
High heaped up with huge iniquities,  
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?"  
God hath said, "The soul that sinneth, it  
shall die". You, as a sinner, must die.

"What then must needs be done,  
Is it not better to doe willingly,  
Then linger till the glas be all out ronne?  
Death is the end of woes: die soone, O faeries sonne."

These words so pierced the heart of the  
Redcrosse knight, and smote his conscience,  
that he was seized with a horror and  
anguish, and saw nought but death  
before him. Then the villain Despaire  
"brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,  
And all that might him to perdition draw,"  
and, when these failed to move him, he  
brought a "dagger sharpe and keene".  
This the pale knight grasped, and  
would <sup>fain</sup> have killed himself; but Anna  
saved him, "snatched the cursed knife,



threw it on the ground, and hastened him away, telling him the while of heavenly mercies in which he might have a part.

Then the foul fiend Despaire, utterly discouraged at the knight's escape from his clutches, cho~~oses~~ a halter and tried to put an end to himself by hanging. But death would not come to his relief. He had wooed death a thousand times already, but die he could not, -

"Till he should die his last, that is eternally; for Despaire is to live as long as mankind shall exist."

Anelia M. Fisk,  
Oct. 20, 1891.



The Model Wellesley Girl; 1880.

(A poem by a Wellesley girl  
who, long after, became a  
Wellesley professor.)

Never broke a regulation,  
Never told a lie,  
Never want to have vacation  
When I don't know why.

Always love to go to section\*,  
Love to go to bed,  
Never nibble sweet confection  
When I am not fed.

Never want to run or whistle,  
For it's not polite,  
Never make a wretched fizzle  
When I don't recite.

On domestic work I enter  
With a double cheer,  
For it fits me to be center  
Of a single sphere.

Never want to buy an apple  
When I go to town,  
Never have to stand in chapel  
When I'm sitting down.

\* prayer-meeting.



You will find Miss Parker able  
With a tear to state,  
That I'm punctual at table  
If I am not late.

In the halls I'm never missing  
When our love is loud,  
But I do no public kissing,  
When there's not a crowd.

When I meet a Harvard student  
Never stop to talk,  
Never take a step imprudent  
When I do not walk.

To my brother once was tender,  
Will not be again,  
Never name the other gender  
Save to say - Amen.

You may gather from this data  
Just how good I be.  
I'm as fond of Alma Mater  
As she is of me.

Katharine Lee Bates,  
1880.